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United Nations reform: measures and proposals

The Millennium Assembly of the United Nations: Thematic framework for the Millennium Summit

Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. On 17 December 1998, the General Assembly, having considered the report of the Secretary-General on renewing the United Nations: a programme for reform (A/51/950 and Add.1–7), and the note by the Secretary-General on a Millennium Assembly, the United Nations system (Special Commission) and a Millennium Forum (A/52/850), adopted resolution 53/202 on the Millennium Assembly of the United Nations. In adopting the resolution, the Assembly decided to designate its fifty-fifth session "The Millennium Assembly of the United Nations" and to convene, as an integral part of the Millennium Assembly, a Millennium Summit of the United Nations for a limited number of days on dates to be decided by the General Assembly at its resumed fifty-third session.

2. In the same resolution, the Secretary-General, *inter alia*, was requested "to seek the views of Member States, members of the specialized agencies and observers and to propose, after a process of intergovernmental consultation, a number of forward-looking and widely relevant topics that could help focus the Millennium Summit within the context of an overall theme, for consideration by the Assembly at its resumed fifty-third session". The Secretary-General was further requested "to consult with non-governmental organizations, as appropriate, before the submission of his proposals".

3. On 3 December 1998, 18 February 1999, 22 March 1999 and 23 April 1999, the President of the General Assembly convened open-ended informal consultations of the plenary to hold discussions on the question of the Millennium Assembly. During those consultations, Member States discussed, *inter alia*, the thematic content of the Millennium Summit.

4. The present report is submitted to further facilitate the intergovernmental deliberations on the thematic framework of the Millennium Summit. Based on the approaches and ideas expressed thus far in the context of the intergovernmental consultative process, the present

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report contains proposals with respect to the overall theme of the Millennium Summit and its sub-topics.

II. Mode of consultations

5. The Secretary-General is particularly grateful to the President of the General Assembly for having presided over five sessions of informal consultations of the plenary of the General Assembly, and to his two facilitators for having conducted informal consultations to elicit the views of Member States on the thematic framework and other issues. The Secretary-General has benefited from these consultations to obtain the views of Member States, members of specialized agencies and observers on the overall theme and sub-topics for the Millennium Summit, as called for in resolution 53/202. The views of non-governmental organizations were sought through the Executive Committee for the Millennium Forum and the Conference of Non-Governmental Organizations. This matter has also been discussed with the Senior Management Group at Headquarters. In addition, the Administrative Committee on Coordination held a retreat from 9 to 10 April 1999 in Geneva devoted to the major challenges faced by the United Nations system.

III. Thematic framework of the Millennium Summit

6. In the discussions that have taken place in the open-ended informal consultations of the plenary, it has been underlined that, irrespective of the decision the Assembly takes on the matter, the theme or themes should "articulate and affirm an animating vision for the United Nations in the new area" and "provide an opportunity to strengthen the role of the United Nations in meeting the challenges of the twenty-first century", as envisioned in resolution 53/202. In this context, the following overall themes have been mentioned:

(a) The role and function of the United Nations in the twenty-first century;

(b) Towards a global society: the tasks for the United Nations in the twenty-first century;

(c) New challenges to multilateralism in the era of globalization;

(d) International cooperation and the role of the United Nations in the twenty-first century;

(e) The role of the United Nations in promoting peace and sustainable development of mankind in the conditions of globalization.

7. Other proposals, either within an overarching theme or as separate themes, were as follows:

(a) Strengthening the capacity of the international community to respond to conflict by taking measures, including preventive measures, peacekeeping and humanitarian activities and peace-building activities, and linkages among them;

(b) Modality for a cooperative mechanism among the United Nations system, regional organizations and non-governmental organizations;

(c) Peace, international security and settlement of disputes;

(d) Disarmament;

(e) Conventional and nuclear disarmament;

(f) Development cooperation and poverty eradication;

(g) Development, including poverty eradication;

(h) Development financing;

(i) Sustainable development;

(j) Globalization and its implications;

(k) Poverty eradication in the context of globalization;

(l) Human security in the context of globalization;

(m) Human rights;

(n) Social development and human rights;

(o) Structural changes and enhancement of the United Nations system;

(p) Regionalism and multilateralism;

(q) The relationship between the United Nations and civil society;

(r) Strengthening the relevance of the General Assembly: new arrangements for the work of the General Assembly;

(s) International cooperation and the role of the United Nations in the twenty-first century.

8. The view was also repeatedly expressed that the themes suggested were effectively interconnected, and that, therefore, the dimension of a specific theme should to be taken into consideration in the discussion of another topic. In particular, it was felt that the selected theme or themes should emphasize the relationship between development on the one hand, and peace and security on the other hand, and thus reflect a common aspiration for the promotion of development and peace and the establishment of a new international political and economic order.

IV. Recommendations

9. In the time available between the adoption of resolution 53/202 and the preparation of the present report, Member States have expressed views on the theme and topics of the Millennium Summit, as provided for in the resolution. While this intergovernmental process with respect to the thematic content of the Millennium Assembly is ongoing, the Secretary-General considers it worthwhile at this stage to submit his recommendations on the theme and sub-topics for the Summit with a view to prompting further intensified discussions.

10. The Secretary-General wishes to propose the following as the overall theme and the sub-topics of the Millennium Summit:

Overall theme: "The United Nations in the twenty-first century"

Sub-topics:

(a) Peace and security, including disarmament;

(b) Development, including poverty eradication;

(c) Human rights;

(d) Strengthening the United Nations.

V. Conclusion

11. The above-mentioned proposals are the result of a two-fold conviction: firstly, that the occasion of the third millennium presents a timely opportunity for the only global organization, in terms of its membership as much as of its areas of work, to identify the challenges that it will face in the future and to engage in an imaginative exercise to enhance and strengthen a unique institution; secondly, that the Millennium Summit will prove to be more than merely a celebratory event. It is essential that it should provide an opportunity for a moral recommitment to the purposes and principles laid down in the Charter of the United Nations and spur new political momentum for the international cooperation and solidarity that the peoples of the world increasingly demand.